

is not true. Those kinds of generalizations will cause us to miss the problem, will cause us to miss the complexity of it.

But what we do know in this particular case was these young people had relatively easy access to these guns, and what we do know is that we have that part, as my colleagues know, that part of the solution coming together in the passage of these measures that have passed the Senate.

So I think we ought to keep and we ought to understand our children, and we should not, we should not paint them with the very broad brush of a relatively and, well, less than two handfuls of children that have perpetrated this kind of violence over the last 18 months. If this was the culture of violence in this young generation, as Michael Males, who is at the School for Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine, points out, if this was a culture of violence, if we had raised children to kill children, then these killings would not be thousands of miles apart and months apart. This is what all children would be doing.

But they are not doing it. Like all of the children before them, they are going to school to get an education, to socialize and become part of their community, to grow up and to mature and decide what they are going to do with the rest of their lives. And their parents did not raise them to kill children.

But some parents unfortunately have been very irresponsible about leaving loaded guns and leaving firearms around, easily accessible to their children, apparently have not had the kind of communication or have not imposed upon their children the kind of discipline I grew up with about a gun.

I hunted, my father hunted, my children hunt. We have very, very strict rules about when one can touch a gun and when they cannot touch a gun and what to do with a gun in the home and what to do with the gun in the field.

Now some parents apparently have not been able to convey that or not willing to convey that or do not understand the kind of risk. We have got to deal with the questions of that kind of parental irresponsibility and with placing some responsibility and liability on those who fail to be the proper custodians of their children and of these firearms.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, the tragedy at Columbine was heartbreaking for all Americans, but it was particularly difficult for the people in my home state of Oregon, where we endured a similar tragedy just one year ago at Thurston High School in Springfield.

At Thurston High, two young students were killed, and America reacted with sadness and sympathy.

At Columbine High, as we all know, thirteen students were killed by the two gunmen. America reacted with profound grief and a renewed sense of urgency.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thirteen children die every day in America—the result of handgun violence. Columbine happens every single day.

It is not nearly as dramatic, there are no CNN cameras, the nation does not stop and hold its breath, and watch . . .

But, every day in America, 13 children die unnecessary deaths from guns.

This is a children's health epidemic—and it is high time this Congress start paying attention to it, and take some steps in the right direction.

Now is the right time to begin the search for answers. Clearly, this is not an easy task. There are many approaches we can take to reduce youth violence:

We can make it easier for parents to spend time with their children.

We can reduce class size so teachers can identify troubled children, and get them the help they need.

We can better teach our young people the value of human life.

We can devote more resources to school counselors and mental health providers.

And we can simply open up the channels of communication between adults and teenagers . . .

What I've learned from listening to Oregon students in their schools, is that perhaps the most important thing we can do to make schools safer, is to create an atmosphere where it is more acceptable for students to talk to adults when they see danger signs.

These are all important steps . . .

Each will be helpful, but none alone or all together will be effective enough to curb this health epidemic without a commitment from this Congress to make guns less accessible to young people.

Conflicts and emotions that get the better of people can sometimes be sorted out with words, sometimes they get sorted out with fists, or with knives . . .

But the only tool of anger that can mow down thirteen students in a school library—is a gun.

Simply passing laws will not address the root causes of this tragedy, but there are steps we can take to keep guns out of the hands of violent juveniles.

That is why I urge my colleagues to support reasonable gun safety measures being introduced by Democrats:

First, let's close the "gun show loophole," which allows criminals to trade weapons anonymously. By instituting background checks for those seeking to anonymously purchase firearms at gun shows, we can make guns less accessible to criminals, and to violent youths.

Second, let's raise the minimum age for handgun purchases from 18 to 21.

Third, let's make sure that guns are childproofed at least as well as a bottle of aspirin—by requiring gunmakers to equip all guns with child safety locks.

And finally, let's show the American people that we're serious about stopping the illegal transfer of guns. I hope my colleagues will join Mr. WEXLER of Florida, myself, 95 other Democrats, and one Republican, Ms. MORELLA, in supporting HR 315—a bill which limits the number of handgun purchases to one per month.

Once again, I don't think that any law will ever be a complete solution. None of us do.

But we're not expected to always find the complete solution. We are here to do what we can to make this country better, safer, healthier, and more prosperous.

These sensible measures are steps in the right direction, steps down a right and sensible path.

I hope our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will take these steps with us. Sooner rather than later.

Because this is an epidemic that waits for none of us. Every day we wait—thirteen more children die—another Columbine—every single day.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, these three measures that have passed the Senate are the beginning step in that area, so I want to thank my colleagues who joined me in this special order. I plead with the American public to call their Member of Congress, to call the Republican leadership, ask them to schedule these gun safety measures as soon as possible, to do it this week. We have a relatively clear calendar. It can all be passed and wrapped up before we go home for the Memorial Day break.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION CREATING PERCEPTION THAT ALL IS WELL IN THE WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, we can only spin national security issues and concerns so long, and eventually the truth catches up to us. The truth is about to hit the fan this week in Washington on the national security concerns of this country.

For 7 years, Mr. Speaker, we have heard the rhetoric coming from the White House that the world is safe, there are no problems, our security is intact, and therefore, we can dramatically cut the size of our defense forces and we can, in fact, shift that money over to other purposes.

During the 7 years that that has occurred, Democrats and Republicans alike in this body and the other body have joined together to constantly remind the administration that things were not quite as good as they were being portrayed to the American people.

Unfortunately, we were not as successful as we would have liked. In fact, Mr. Speaker, State of the Union speech after State of the Union speech the President would stand before the American people and would talk about the economy, would talk about jobs, would talk about crimes domestically, but no mention of national security concerns. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this